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LETTER DATED 9 JUNE 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement made in Parliament on 8 June 1998 by the Prime Minister of India.

I would request that the present letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kamalesh SHARMA

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Annex

Statement by the Prime Minister of India to the Parliament on 8 June 1998 on Security Council resolution 1172 (1998) of 6 June 1998

The Honourable Members are aware of the resolution adopted on 6 June 1998 by the United Nations Security Council. I would like to take the House into confidence on our position on this matter.

We regret that the Security Council has acted in the manner in which it has and produced a resolution which is completely unhelpful in respect of the objectives it seeks to address. The resolution contains a number of references to nuclear non-proliferation. As I had mentioned in my earlier statement to the House, we are a responsible and committed member of the international community. The resolution urges us not to carry out any nuclear weapon test explosions. For India, such an urging is redundant because we have already instituted a voluntary moratorium. We have also indicated our willingness to explore ways and means of converting this undertaking into a de jure obligation. Further, we have made clear our readiness to engage in multilateral negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. We cannot, however, be expected to commit ourselves in advance of these negotiations to unilaterally restraining production of fissile materials. In keeping with our commitment to non-proliferation, we maintain the strictest controls over exports of nuclear materials and technologies. Our record in this regard has been impeccable, and better than that of some countries that are parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group or even permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.

However, the call made in the resolution that we should stop our nuclear programmes or missile programmes is unacceptable. Decisions in this regard will be taken by the Government on the basis of our own assessments and national security requirements, in a reasonable and responsible manner. This right, which we claim for ourselves, is not something new; it is the right of every sovereign country and a right that every Government in this country has strongly upheld for the last 50 years.

A glaring lacuna in the resolution is the total absence of a recognition that the non-proliferation issue is not a regional issue but has to be dealt with in a non-discriminatory global context. We find it unfortunate that the Security Council resolution does not reflect on the judgement of the highest international judicial body - the International Court of Justice - which has questioned the legitimacy of nuclear weapons and called for urgent negotiations for their elimination. In the paper on the evolution of India's nuclear policy laid on the table of this House, we have reiterated our commitment to nuclear disarmament. Let me categorically state that unlike other nuclear weapon States that have sought to retain an exclusive hold over their nuclear arsenals, India has no such ambition. The Government is committed to initiatives that can open negotiations for a global convention for the elimination of all nuclear weapons. The attempt to portray the recent tests by India as a threat to peace and

security is totally misguided and grossly out of focus. Such a portrayal of our policy ignores the positive steps announced by the Government to which I have already referred, both in the global disarmament framework and in the regional context. Our tests were necessary because of the failure of a flawed non-proliferation regime, and, therefore, we categorically reject the notion that these have adversely affected either regional or global security.

The Government has indicated its willingness to engage in a meaningful dialogue with key interlocutors on the whole range of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issues. Last week, Special Envoy Shri Brajesh Mishra visited Paris and London in this regard. He had meetings at the most senior levels in the two capitals. Dialogues with other countries are also planned. These dialogues have to be seen as part of a process, a process that will lead to a better understanding of India's position.

The Honourable Members are aware that India has always desired a peaceful, friendly and mutually beneficial relationship with Pakistan based on confidence and respect for each other's concerns. I have already said on the floor of both houses, and I would like to reiterate, that a secure and prosperous Pakistan is in India's interest. Our vision of our bilateral relationship is not confined to a resolution of outstanding issues, but is also directed to the future by seeking to build a stable structure of cooperation, which will benefit the people of both countries. As I wrote recently to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, we must not remain mired in the past, prisoners of old contentions. And I say to him today, let us put the past behind us, let us think of the welfare of our children and grandchildren.

We have remained committed to a path of direct bilateral dialogue with Pakistan. This reflects the nation's conviction and confidence that it is only through direct discussions carried out in a sustained and constructive manner that we can move ahead in our bilateral relationship. I would again like to reiterate our desire for the earliest resumption of the official talks with Pakistan. The subjects for discussion, including peace and security (along with confidence-building measures), Jammu and Kashmir, economic and commercial cooperation and cross-border terrorism, have been identified. Our proposals for the modalities of these talks have been with Pakistan since January of this year. We await its response. We have also made it clear once again that there is no place for outside involvement of any nature whatsoever in our dialogue with Pakistan.

The Honourable Members have expressed strong reservations against attempts to internationalize the Kashmir issue. There is simply no question of India ever agreeing to such internationalization. The United Nations Security Council has chosen to mention Kashmir in its resolution. This is unacceptable and does not change the reality that the state of Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of the Indian Union. I would also like to draw the attention of the Honourable Members to the terms in which Kashmir finds mention in the resolution. The Security Council has recognized that bilateral dialogue has to be the basis of India-Pakistan relations and mutually acceptable solutions have to be found for outstanding issues, including Kashmir. This is in keeping with our position.